

Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee Forest Plan Revision Public Information & Scoping Meeting
Sept. 7, 2011
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Twisp Grange, 344 Second W. Ave., Twisp, WA

Meeting Purpose and Overview

The USDA Forest Service (Forest Service), Methow Valley Ranger District hosted a public information and scoping meeting for the Colville and Okanogan National Forest Plan in Twisp, Washington on September 7, 2011. The meeting provided a combination of formats, including open house, presentation, question and response. Fourteen members of the public attended the meeting.

The meeting served two purposes: to provide the public an opportunity to learn about the Forest Service's proposals for long-term management of the Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests, and to provide information on how the public can comment on the proposals, how their comments will be used, and to learn about future opportunities for their involvement.

Meeting Agenda

Debbie Kelly, Forest Service meeting facilitator, welcomed everyone and explained the meeting objectives, agenda, and meeting conduct. Mike Liu, Methow Valley District Ranger, talked briefly about the Forest Plan Revision process, the value and use of comments and balancing various user needs, and Forest Service expectations for the meeting. Mike introduced members of the Forest Service's Forest Plan Revision team and local staff.

Presentation

Margaret Hartzell, Team leader, presented the key concepts of the Proposed Actions. Since this meeting was held in Twisp, Margaret focused on the specific proposals related to the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. She provided a general overview; a process timeline; and *new* and *continued* goals of the Proposed Actions for the following categories:

- Aquatics and riparian systems
- Plants
- Vegetation
- Wildlife habitat
- Access
- Livestock grazing
- Recreation
- Renewable forest products

- Scenery
- Preliminary Wilderness recommendations

Margaret also explained the “tools” the plan uses, as well as how comments are being gathered and used in the process. Please see Attachment 1 for the presentation slides.

Questions & Answers (Q&A)

The following is a synopsis of questions (Q), comments (C) and corresponding responses (R) from the meeting. *This is not intended to be a verbatim transcription of this portion of the meeting; similar questions / concerns were combined for summarization purposes.*

Q: What is the percentage of Okanogan NF, Methow Valley Ranger District is currently in Designated Wilderness? And what percentage of the Okanogan NF is being considered for recommended wilderness versus the Wenatchee NF portion of the forest?

R: I don't have the exact figures with me for that specific breakdown. In general the Wenatchee NF portion is so much larger and has 1.3 million acres of currently designated wilderness.

Q/C: BCH does have a concern about the potential for more wilderness. Forest Service funding is declining and there is less money to maintain wilderness trails. Fewer grants and resources are available for other things. We'd like to see the Birch Mountain/Falls Creek trails left out of wilderness. Our volunteers who clear those trails are in their 60's and 70's, and they will not be able to maintain those trails with cross cut saws.

Q: What are the main differences between areas designated as Wilderness versus non-designated?

R: It goes back to the 1964 Wilderness Act—briefly designated wilderness are areas managed to allow natural processes to take place, largely un-influenced by humans. They are areas that would be, off limits for extraction of resources such as biomass or saw logs, or other forest products. The types of activities that are permitted would be those that are non-motorized or non-mechanized, such as hiking and horseback riding. There are methods or tools available to the forest service for managing wilderness areas. Prescribed fire could be allowed, and fire suppression is allowed but using a lighter hand on the land.

Q: What is the rationale for proposing additional wilderness in the Methow Valley? Why couldn't we move the line back (remove areas from designated wilderness) in some areas to compensate for proposed expansion?

R: Most wilderness recommendations on the Okanogan-Wentachee National Forest are to address boundary management issues; all areas proposed are adjacent to currently Designated Wilderness areas. There were no “stand alone” areas recommended on the Oka-Wen, however Colville NF had several. And, the Forest Service does not have authority to remove or un-designate Wilderness that would be up to Congress.

Q. What happens to areas that are proposed for recommended wilderness if Congress decides not to make them Wilderness? Who decides how those areas are managed?

R: Those areas would likely be “released” to the Forest with direction by Congress to determine how they would be managed, which would likely be as backcountry or backcountry motorized to maintain their roadless quality.

Q. Could you briefly describe how a Designated Wilderness is managed?

R: Wilderness areas are managed to permit use by hikers and horseback riders, or other stock. Motorized and mechanized uses (such as mountain bikes and chainsaws) are not permitted. It’s also managed to allow or emphasize natural process to play out. Wilderness managers do have tools and methods available to them for fighting fire or treating disease or noxious weeds, restoring trails or campsites, or allowing prescribed natural fire, however they involve a lighter approach on the land.

Q: What are Late Successional Reserves (LSR’s) and who makes them? They seem a lot like wilderness. Are LSR’s a part of the proposed action?

R: In 1994 the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) designated a network of Late-Successional Reserves (LSR) with the object of protecting and enhancing conditions of late-successional and old-growth forest ecosystems. LSR’s are not a part of the proposed action.

Q: Will snowmobiles be allowed in the proposed Backcountry and Backcountry Motorized management areas?

R: Yes, snowmobiles will be allowed in Backcountry and Backcountry Motorized areas where permitted. Some areas may have seasonal closures, for example such as protection of wildlife fawning and calving areas. Not proposing any changes to where the Forests currently authorize winter motorized use. The exception would be if one of the proposed wilderness areas were to be designation wilderness. However until such as time that Congress may act, current uses could continue just as long as the use was not permitted to grow or be further developed.

Q. If it costs more to maintain trails in wilderness why designate more Wilderness?

R: The areas are reviewed for their capability, availability and need to be added to the National Wilderness Preservation system. In some cases the values and tradeoffs of proposing an area for recommended wilderness must be weighed against concerns such as the potential for

increased maintenance costs.

C: The National Park won't allow fire management in the Park.

R: We can't address National Park management.

Closing

Debbie noted that while the formal presentation and question-and-response session was over, Forest Service staff would be available for further discussion and to answer any remaining questions.

Margaret and Mike thanked everyone for their participation in the process, noting that their input will be helpful in developing plans in the future. They also encouraged everyone to continue to ask questions in the remaining time and to submit written comments by September 28.

The open house reconvened for another 30 minutes. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Attachment 1: Presentation Slides

<h1>WELCOME!</h1> <h2>COLVILLE AND OKANOGAN-WENATCHEE NATIONAL FOREST PLAN REVISION</h2> <h3>PUBLIC INFORMATION AND SCOPING MEETING</h3> <p>September 7, 2011 Twisp, Washington</p>	<h2>Agenda</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none">6:00 p.m. Open House6:30 p.m. Welcome and Meeting Overview6:45 p.m. Informational Presentation Questions and Responses7:30 p.m. Return to Open House8:00 p.m. Adjourn <p>NEWZ Plan Revision</p>
<h2>Meeting Principles</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Listen actively□ Participate actively□ Discuss concerns in a constructive and civil manner□ Share question and response time□ Please hold applause□ Turn off/mute electronic devices□ Let the Forest Service Staff know if you need help finding something, or someone to talk with you.□ The FS will genuinely try to answer, as specifically as possible, any questions about the proposed actions and how they may affect your interest(s) on the Colville or Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests. <p>NEWZ Plan Revision</p>	<h2>Informational Presentation</h2> <p>Margaret Hartzell, Forest Plan Revision Team Leader</p> <p>NEWZ Plan Revision</p>
<h2>Why you should be involved</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Forest Plan Revision – Proposed Action public involvement□ June 30 to September 28, 2011 <p><i>"Sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forest and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations."</i> - Forest Service Mission</p> <p>NEWZ Plan Revision</p>	<h2>What Plans Do...</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Describes desired<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Habitat for wildlife, aquatic species, and plants□ Vegetation (trees, shrubs, range lands)□ Identifies areas suited for kinds of travel<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ on foot, motorized, or mechanized□ Recommend wilderness, determine eligibility of wild and scenic rivers□ Provide sideboards for projects<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ standards and guidelines <p>NEWZ Plan Revision</p>

Plan Revision – the basics

- Managing expectations
- Bring current plan up-to-date as required by NFMA
- Cannot make changes to laws, regulations, the directives, policy



Umbrella
Operating framework for Forest

NEWZ Plan Revision

Time Line

- This summer – Proposed Action
- Summer 2012 – DEIS
- Summer 2013 – FEIS
- Fall 2013 – revised forest plan



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- Aquatics and Riparian Systems
 - ▣ New – Key watersheds
 - ▣ Continuing – good water quality, riparian buffers, healthy riparian ecosystems



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- Plants
 - ▣ Continue – preventing introduction and spread of invasive plants
 - ▣ Using native plants
 - ▣ Protecting unique habitats, rare plants, ESA species
 - ▣ Have healthy ecosystems



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- Vegetation
 - ▣ New – role of disturbance in ecosystem; data on composition, structure, and spatial patterns
 - ▣ Continue – focus on ecosystem restoration and forest health, managing wildfire risks, contributing habitat



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- Wildlife Habitat
 - ▣ New – science to better describe habitat condition; ESA species
 - ▣ Continue – high quality habitat, connectivity, and contributing to recovery of ESA species



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- Access – roads and trails, docks and bridges
 - ▣ Continue – safe, affordable, environmentally sound system of roads and trails
 - ▣ Continue – range of recreational trails
 - NOTE on the Travel Management process



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- Livestock Grazing
 - ▣ Continue – range lands in good condition.



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- Recreation
 - ▣ New – additional data on recreation trends and use specific to Forest
 - ▣ Continue – offer quality, nature-based recreation in outdoor setting



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- Renewable Forest Products
 - ▣ Special forest products, merchantable wood products
 - ▣ Continue – provide firewood, saw timber, biomass, wood fiber
 - ▣ Average 48-52 mmbf and 10,000 acres per year on average in timber outputs



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- Scenery
 - ▣ New – system that emphasizes actively managing to enhance and maintain
 - ▣ Continue – provide beautiful scenery



NEWZ Plan Revision

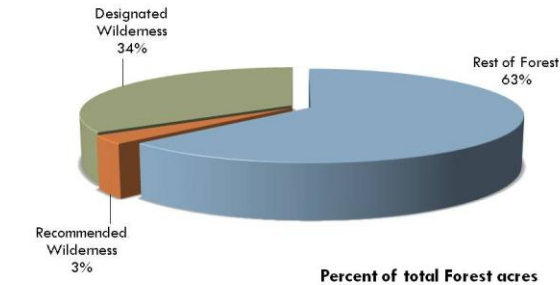
Proposed Action

- Preliminary Wilderness Recommendation
 - ▣ Continue – Designated Wilderness – 1,470,000 acres
 - ▣ New – preliminary recommendation of 125,800 acres.
 - Not final decision, existing uses can continue until Congress acts
 - Did not recommend areas with motorized trails, mining operations, WUI with dry Forest, tools needed, not high quality



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- Tool the plan uses - Management Areas
 - Consistent with neighbors
 - Habitats move
 - New congressionally created trail – Pacific Northwest National Scenic



NEWZ Plan Revision

Commenting

- Today – gather information, ask questions
- Tomorrow - Send us comments specific to the proposed action, on-target, thoughtful
- Use comments to build options (alternatives) for plan



NEWZ Plan Revision

How to Comment

- Send comments to:
Forest Plan Revision
Okanogan Valley Office
1240 Second Avenue South
Okanogan, WA 98840
- Email: r6_ewzplanrevision@fs.fed.us
- Website: www.fs.usda.gov/goto/okawen/plan-revision

Comments are most helpful if received by September 28, 2011.

NEWZ Plan Revision

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NEWZ Plan Revision

Attachment 2: Public Meeting Attendees and Forest Service Staff

(Table includes only those attendees who signed-in. Affiliation, city/state provided by attendees on sign in sheets)

Public Meeting Attendees

Name	Affiliation (if any)	City, State
George Brown	MVSA	Twisp, WA
Janet Logan	MV BCH	Carlton, WA
Joe & Carol Herbert	MVSA, MV BCH	Twisp, WA
Bill Ford	MV BCH	Twisp, WA
Edward Surette	MVSA	Winthrop, WA
Don Fitzpatrick, Jr.	MVSA	Winthrop, WA
Deanne Thurlow	-	Twisp, WA
Ira & Lloyd Remsberg	MV Snowmobile Club, BCH, ATV Club	Twisp, WA
Jerry & Chris Holm	Snowmobile	Winthrop, WA
Jim & Chris Vannice	Snowmobile	Twisp, WA
Ann McCreary	MV News	Twisp, WA
Stephen O. Campbell	Snowmobile, ATV, BCH	Winthrop, WA
Spencer King	NC ATV Club	Omak, WA

Forest Service Staff

Name	Forest	City, State
Margaret Hartzell	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Okanogan, WA
Mike Liu	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Winthrop, WA
Debbie Kelly	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Okanogan, WA
Cathy Corrigan	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Winthrop, WA
Jennifer Zbyszewski	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Winthrop, WA
